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SMOKING NOT ALLOWED.

THE philanthropists and the Honorary Secretaries have been at it again. On this occasion their vagaries have taken a bandy-legged form; they have rotated after the fashion of James the 1st of England and 6th of Scotland, and they have issued a blast against the use of Tobacco. Mr. Peter Spence, F.C.S., whom we, some of us, know as a very well-to-do chemist, and in many respects a very sensible man and a good citizen, is the new Peter the Hermit who is going to put all our pipes out, or, we ought to say, who means to try to do it, of course through the medium of honorary secretaries, parsons, and women, the last following the clerical multitude to do—shall we say good or evil?

It will soon be very difficult for a working man to descry anything left in the world except a few catechisms and the town pumps;—we are fast coming to that. On the only day of leisure the workman has, almost every avenue of instruction or amusement is closed to him; he is compelled to lounge about the agreeable alleys and courts of our large towns; and now Mr. Spence benignly comes forward to fill up the measure of the artizan's enjoyments by snatching his pipe out of his mouth and trampling it under foot. What is to be the end of it all? Why is there so much of this inadequate crusading all round the clock? Because a few little swells make themselves sick, and disorder their poor stomachs—or because a few old fools will mope, and smoke, and expectorate the live-long day, the hermits and the hon. secretaries want to deprive hundreds and thousands of their fellow-creatures of an innocent solace and a moderate enjoyment—which they never yet abused, and which it is unlikely they ever will; and the use of it cannot, for them, be deleterious, as they are amongst the most stalwart men upon earth. Wherever you hear the ring of the backwoodsman's axe, as he wages war against the primæval forest, there will you behold the smoke curling up from his pipe, probably his only companion, his comfort, and his stay. Hermit will, no doubt, laugh this description to scorn, and will guarantee to clear a shrubby territory with no other companion except a bottle of soda water and some sanitary jujubes. What about the Australian squatter, the Irish peasant, the boor of Holland, and the German Michel, the men who marched the other day into Mont Valerien, and the smoke of whose pipes has gone up to heaven before Paris, all the weary weeks since that city was first invested? Have these men physically anything to be ashamed of? Are they paralytic, or inclined that way—slow in action or in resolution—flaccid in any one essential particular—less in possession of their limbs or their wits than Dr. J. Edmunds, of London; Dr. W. Hardwicke, of Paddington; Dr. Rayner, of this city (whose knowledge apparently consists in beliefs), and those interesting clergymen, the Rev. T. Boaden, Rev. H. J. Betts, Rev. R. Mitchell, and Rev. R. Macwilliam? Professor Kirk, of Edinbro'—no doubt a Scotch Kirk—spoke of relaxation of the muscles caused by smoking. It seems almost disrespectful to question a professor; but we should like to know how Mr. Kirk reconciles the foregoing statement with the fact that some of the strongest men in the world, those accustomed to bear the heaviest burdens for the longest time, are habitual smokers? Not only do they smoke after meals, but very frequently when their hardest exercise is going on. Has the professor never seen a navigator wheeling a huge barrow of hard marl or clay up a steep plank with a pipe in his mouth? If the cockles about the heart of the Professor, which, no doubt, occasionally get warmed by sanitary jujubes—nothing stronger—remain always in as good condition as the muscles of that wheel-barrowing navigator, the world will gain in geniality even though it may smell a little of smoke.

The wilful blindness of hermits, parsons, and women to what is going on around them is really astounding. In this case of Tobacco it is almost an insult to one's common sense that they should seem to require any reply. What is the use of talking to such men as Dr. Close of Carlisle about the difference between moderate enjoyment and excess? The Dean does not know what moderate enjoyment is, unless it be of very moderate Christianity and charity to his neighbours, for in these directions the very reverend gentleman never goes to excess. Imagine a man addressing his neighbours, as Mr. Spence did a week ago, at the Memorial Hall, and wanting to cover the absurdity of the transaction by taking credit for good intentions. May not the following bit of rhetoric be said to be up to snuff and a pinch over?

> In the name of science, in the name of the social amenities of life, in the name of humanity, and last, but not least, in the name of Christianity, they had met to enter their most solemn protest against the growing habit of tobacco smoking. . . . . He might perhaps be allowed to say, that tobacco contained one of the most deadly of alkaline poisons—nicotine; one drop of which placed on the tongue of a dog would produce immediate death.

This is grievous rhodomontade for a gentleman ordinarily having his faculties so well in hand as Mr. Spence. If the introduction of that unfortunate dog into his speech mean anything as bearing upon smokers, it must mean that they are gradually working out that drop of nicotine which is so fatal to poor Tray. "Cave canem" says Mr. Spence, but the fact is that the dog has really nothing to do with the matter at all, especially as he is very unlikely to take the nicotine in the form that smokers do, and to wag his tail and ask you to oblige him with a light. On the other hand, whilst the dog will not smoke, the smoker will not take the drop of nicotine; and, consequently, for all the purposes of this discussion, we had better tie a tin can to Mr. Spence's dog, and let him rattle away into the twilight of remote obscurity.

Mr. Spence went on to throw a beautiful beam of novel radiance athwart the surface of Christianity, when he said: "The use of tobacco was un-Christian, and no follower of Christ had a right to indulge in it. He had never smoked a pipe or a cigar in his life, and he never would." Unluckily for Christianity, as we believe, it is getting fearfully handicapped by its professed votaries in these days. They appear to be bent upon making it unlovely and of the hard-shell order, and they are succeeding, in some cases, even beyond their most sanguine expectations. Sensible men and women are trying very earnestly to make the people find out the great Christian polity in its broadest phases; but to these efforts there usually succeed a shoal of zealots who whip the people back into the narrow pens of their own devices. They want to interpret literally the saying that it is through much tribulation that you shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven; and so Mr. Spence and his coadjutors treat the Kingdom of Heaven as a drawing-room in which no smoking can be tolerated. Poor Robert Hall, of Leicester—most eloquent of Baptists, who, in the agony of an almost life-long disease, found only rest and peace from his soothing pipe!—what would he have said to the new hermit and the deputy coroner for Central Middlesex? We recollect, years ago, a fine old Nonconformist parson—the Rev. Mr. Silvester by name—

honourably mentioned in Mr. Urwick's most interesting book, called *Nonconformity in Cheshire*—a man who did immense service in his day in preaching the Gospel to the hinds of Cheshire, and who now and then received only stripes and paving-stones for his reward. As a boy at school, it was our delight to get alongside the old Dissenter when he smoked his pipe after supper under the trees in the little garden of the schoolhouse, and to listen to his quaint, droll anecdotes, as the soothing tabak stole over his nerves. If he could rise from his grave now, what would he say, the staid, good old soul, to the modern views of the Christian faith propounded by Mr. Spence?

If these men are so hostile to smoking they must put the noses of half Scotland out of joint by prohibiting snuff. Are they prepared to make a mull of their association by trying it on? Suppose Mr. Spence produces his dog again, will not Sandy say, "Do not wauk a sleeping dogue?" Then there are the pluggers and the chewers: what is to be done with them? These Spencites will not allow a man to take tobacco as he desires to take it. They introduce it in unaccustomed combinations and then seek to establish their theories on premisses which have never existed and never will. Dr. Edmunds of London said:—"A man might easily kill himself by tobacco. Only let him place a cigar in a teapot, pour half a pint of boiling water upon it, drink it up, and he would die in a minute. This is a simple fact, which any one might try upon a dog." Another dog! We think the dogs are getting a very scant measure of justice from the Anti-Tobacconists. But now what nonsense this is about the teapot. Need we tell Dr. Edmunds of London that we *smoke* cigars and do not make tea of them. If we did, and died, as Dr. Edmunds says we should, "in a minute," probably his friend Dr. Hardwicke the coroner would direct the jury to a verdict of served him right. As to tobacco "damaging the texture of the brain,"—which is another theory of Dr. Edmunds'—if the texture of the brains of the Anti-Tobacconists may be judged of by their recent display at the Memorial Hall, the un-Christian men who smoke a pipe occasionally need not fear the cerebral comparison.

We are a long-suffering community in England at present, and what with hermits, honorary secretaries, parsons, and women, it is scarcely to be wondered at that there is so much emigration. But then the captain and sailors on the emigrant ship, whose muscles are so very relaxed in a storm, will insist upon either chewing or smoking. So that even the equator has an objectionable smell notwithstanding a fair ventilation.

MR. POYNTER, A.R.A., ON DECORATIVE ART.

ANY one accustomed to attend the lectures given at the Royal Institution would have been considerably astonished last Friday evening to find that an audience sufficiently numerous to fill the hall was gathered together to listen to a lecture having for its theme the little understood or cared-for branch of Art-Decoration. Fortunately, on this occasion, the authorities of the Institution took no part in the proceedings beyond letting the room. Mr. E. J. Poynter, A.R.A., the painter of "The Catapult," and the still more famous "Israel in Egypt," was on a visit to Manchester, and a few gentlemen availed themselves of the opportunity, and invited him to deliver this lecture. The non-intervention of the Royal Institution authorities probably accounts in some measure for its success—the success, that is, which is indicated by the gathering together of a large audience—for the lecture itself could not fail to instruct and interest all who heard it.

It is impossible here to do more than simply mention a few points of the lecture which struck us as being invaluably true, and at the same time but seldom acknowledged or considered by the public and even a majority of artists. At least we may presume such to be the case if our exhibitions and manufactures are to be taken as fair witnesses.

Mr. Poynter took as his text the importance of Truth and Realism in decoration, and divided his lecture into two parts—Art Manufacture and Painting. In the latter he selected, by way of illustration, Michel Angelo, drawing comparisons between his work and that of the Greeks, and certainly showing the great Italian in a new light. In the first place, Mr. Poynter declares that "whatever is made by man is capable of being made beautiful in a more or less degree." That, he urged, is the one idea that should be forced into the minds of all employed in works of construction of whatever kind and however cheap and common (except perhaps red bricks, which are not capable of much variety of form) and when they clearly understand that the object in the formation of which they are engaged may have something more in it than its actual utility. There may be hopes that at last some new era of art may arrive to take the place of our lost traditions, and to bring back to us some knowledge of the "beauty of fitness," though we have but little hope of any such resurrection as long as the curse of rapid wealth-seeking by means of bad work exists and is suffered by the purchasers. The atrocious monstrosities perpetrated by engineers in the way of railway bridges and stations are scarcely to be wondered at by anyone knowing anything of the management of railway companies; but when we are told by Mr. Poynter that it is almost impossible to obtain a really good Turkey carpet, because the wools are dyed in England to suit the English taste, with all the varieties of magenta, mauve, and aniline dyes generally, and then sent away to be manufactured as best they may, it cannot be but that the case is hopeless. Nothing can do more to destroy all taste for harmonious colour than a constant contemplation of such harsh and detestable colours as mauve, magenta, *et hoc genus omne*. They will suit nothing, not even each other, and they have the effect of destroying everything really good that is near them. They are abominations simply, and it is to be hoped will fade with speed. To quote the lecture again, "Colours that are bad to begin with cannot be made to look anything but disagreeable."

Another point of great value was the following: "There is nothing inappropriate in the imitation of nature in surface decoration, *provided it is subservient to the more important necessities of decorative design*." This does not apply to that kind of inappropriateness which Mr. Poynter amusingly illustrated by referring to japanned coal scuttles with pictures on them of lap-dogs, roses, or churches by moonlight, which, whether well done or ill done, would be out of place, and therefore wrong; but to the question whether realistic decoration in relief, and perhaps realistic to the extent of deception, is right or not. This is rather a startling declaration, and would seem untenable, except for the last half of the sentence. That we should feel inclined to translate as meaning, provided the initiative work is sufficiently well done not to distress the spectator by any incompleteness; in fact, provided it is so perfect that you do not notice whether it is realistic or anything else, except wonderfully beautiful. Mr. Poynter says that chiaroscuro in stained glass is wrong—firstly, because in the fitness of things a window is transparent, and should appear so; and, secondly, the lead lines destroy at once any deception. Therefore, for the first reason only of course, it is difficult to see why a wall should be made to look like anything else but a wall or a ceiling, unless they be painted as perfectly as the Sistine Chapel is by Michel Angelo. Even then it would seem to be somewhat of an exception; for it is hardly possible to imagine a floor painted with figures or patterns in realistic relief that would be endurable, however noble the design and complete the execution. Certainly "truth is the basis of beauty," and there is every reason why even a leaf on a wall-paper should be accurately drawn; but it is by omissions of certain truths, not commission of falsehood, that we understand the reservation, "subservience to the more important necessities of decorative design." Michel Angelo could do anything and not be wrong; but we should be sorry to see our designers of chintzes and wall-papers attempt realism all at once. Their work is bad enough now whilst they keep to flat patterns, but what would result if they gave us chiaroscuro is too dreadful to imagine.

The conclusion of the lecture must have been somewhat startling to a large majority of the audience. Those who have never seen Michel Angelo's work, generally look upon him as a magnificent genius, great in everything, but accustomed to exaggerate the drawing of his figures, and in striving after grandeur to overstep the laws of nature. Mr. Poynter, who speaks with an authority which no one will contest, declares that such is not the case; that no painter has ever been so

abused by the engravers, through whom we mostly know his greatness; and that "no one who has not seen the original works can have the slightest idea what Michel Angelo's work is." Giving the highest praise to the Greeks as having produced "a school of art for the whole world as long as the world lasts," Mr. Poynter places the great Florentine beyond them in that he combined more perfectly Idealism and Realism, being never inferior to them in pure beauty and often surpassing them in truth.

If Mr. Poynter had done no more than open the eyes of such of us as have not known Michel Angelo, except through an engraver's translation, he had earned our best thanks. But throughout the lecture there was much matter for thought, and if there result from it some more keen insight into, or consideration of, art than before, among those who heard him; if he has helped to persuade his audience that there is nothing made by man so mean but that it may be bad or good in art, and that as we have the poorest things well done so we shall have the highest things nobly done in an equal ratio, Mr. Poynter may be sure that he has not been at pains and trouble in vain.

MANCHESTER HOTELS.

THE CROSIER.

THE mania for building monster hotels has not yet extended to Manchester, and we doubt if the general community, which makes use of such places of accommodation, will have much cause to grieve even if the epidemic should not reach this place. Monster hotels, however gorgeously and elaborately got up, are not exactly the places where one may expect comfort. They partake too much of the character of a vast wilderness without any contiguity of shade to be the places where the tired and dusty traveller seeks to obtain repose of body and mind. To our thinking, it is the reverse of agreeable to have your bedroom several stories and corridors removed from the coffee-room, or whatever other part of the house you may inhabit. Neither is going up to your bedroom in a hoist, whenever you may desire to visit that apartment, at all a pleasant alternative. The general atmosphere of such barrack-like establishments is cold, freezing, and comfortless. You feel isolated, lonely, dejected, and if far from home, probably very home-sick. You are puzzled and pestered with relays of male waiters who all have, or profess to have, their separate and infinitesimal departments, like a lot of Hindoo servants, and are inclined to do as little in the way of attention as possible. Such hotels may do for people of large means who can take suites of rooms and have their own servants, but they are not the place for ordinary mortals. So far the Manchester hotels have avoided such Brobdignagian propensities, and have kept themselves within moderate dimensions. In fact, many of the Manchester first-class hotels have not been originally designed or built for the purposes for which they are now used, but have from time to time been enlarged, altered, added to, and partially rebuilt, which gives most of them a crazy, zig-zag sort of character, but which does not altogether detract from a certain kind of coziness and comfort, although it may cause some additional work and trouble to their occupants. Lofty ceilings are very good things, and airy saloons are all very well in their way, but great draughty saharas with perpetual douche-baths flowing down the back of your neck, and without a comfortable corner in which to take refuge, are depressing to the spirits.

The Crosier, although not so prominently situated, nor so outwardly imposing as some of its larger rivals, is, nevertheless, a good specimen of an average-sized hotel, and can compare with most of its competitors in internal comfort; while, as regards quietness, it is superior to them all. As there is no main thoroughfare past the house, it is possible to sleep o' nights, without being disturbed by the rattle of cabs and carriages. The Crosier, as its name denotes, derives its title from the adjacent Cathedral. Indeed, we always identify it somehow or other with that edifice, probably from so constantly meeting the dignitaries of the church in the immediate vicinity. As the old-fashioned looking vehicles which convey some of the Canons occasionally to and from the church, take up their stand, while waiting for their occupants, immediately in front of the hotel, a superficial observer might conclude that they were inside the hostelry instead of being occupied with their clerical duties further on. Such an impression, however, would be quite erroneous, as may be observed any day at the conclusion of divine service, the rite of baptism, or the celebration of marriage. Nevertheless, as we have said, we always identify the Crosier with the Cathedral and the Episcopate, with which it is contemporaneous. If not the rose, it is next to the rose. A certain air of repose pervades the locality, although the prevailing character of the buildings and tenements in the immediate neighbourhood is of the most mean and even squalid nature. The Crosier, however, which has been entirely rebuilt of late years, is an exception to its low-looking neighbours in the adjoining courts and alleys. Bounded on the north by the churchyard and on the south by a life assurance company, it lies between the quick and the dead, and hangs suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, betwixt heaven and earth. The soil and situation seem favourable to the growth of inns, hotels, and small places of refreshment.

When the Old Church was first built, doubtless Hunt's Bank was a pleasant spot, with a pure brook running at its base. The ecclesiastics of those days had a keen eye for fat and pleasant places on which to rear their temples. The lapse of time has made wonderful changes, and now the locality is chiefly remarkable for its church, a dirty ditch, an old college, a new grammar school, sundry hotels, and pigeon flying. The neighbourhood seems to have become a centre of hotel as well as of parochial industry, for the Crosier is surrounded on all sides by symbolical Mitres, Palatinates, Cathedrals, Crowns and Anchors, Crowns and Thistles, Hope and Anchors, Towers, Wedding Rings, and Rings o' Bells. Probably the more unpretending of these establishments obtain the patronage of some of those unsophisticated country wedding parties which turn up in great numbers at "th' owd church," particularly about Easter, Whitsuntide, and other holidays. The Crosier, however, caters for higher custom, and comes in for a large portion of public support, both from strangers passing through the city, and from the citizens themselves. Being also in a direct line between the business part of the town and the Victoria Station, it is a favourite resting place for country manufacturers who may have to wait a short time for their trains after having finished their day's business; and the great bulk of country spinners and manufacturers would not consider that they had finished their day's business properly in town without having contributed to the serenity of the inner man and talked affairs over either at club, tavern, or hotel.

Having thus glanced at the exterior of the Crosier Hotel, which really is a handsome stone building, let us now devote a short space to its internal economy. Some time since, in giving a description of the Gloucester Hotel, we said that its most distinctive feature was commercial, although it was ruled over by the Emperor, Napoleon B——yparte. The Crozier is also under imperial sway, and the reins of government are in the experienced hands of the Empress Regent, the Salique law being no longer in force. Although, however, the government is absolute, the constitution is broad, and is founded upon the principle of the church and railway stations. It includes also, as represented by its various clients, Law, Commerce, and even Literature and Art. It has an attractive bar on the ground-floor, and various members of that profession—judges, Queen's counsel, and others—have temporary residences, and transact business in the upper chambers thereof. The art of gastronomy is administered unto on the basement story by sundry professional artists in the kitchen, whom the late Mr. W. M. Thackeray somewhat profanely designated as Doctors of Divinity, thus establishing a union with several of the spiritual magnates immediately over the way. The same noble art of gastronomy, which is thoroughly understood by the ruling powers, is duly appreciated and receives the patronage of Manchester merchants and manufacturers in various apartments and saloons set apart for that purpose. Literature is represented by an amphibious kind of club, which holds its meetings there periodically, and the members of which, if they do not, like the Edinburgh reviewer, cultivate literature upon a little oatmeal, may be said at least to cultivate social joys and pleasures on a modicum of letters.

The Crosier also possesses a smoke-room, or we should rather say smoke-rooms, for two apartments joining each other appear to be used promiscuously for that purpose, and why they should not have been thrown into one, when the place was rebuilt, is one of those mysteries which may be known to the architect, but is incomprehensible to us. The room originally intended for smoking purposes is a peculiarly

shaped apartment, very narrow at the entrance. Then it suddenly widens for a short space, and finally becomes narrow again at the fire place. It reminds us of the proverbial fly in amber, or the pear which one sometimes sees in a soda-water bottle, inasmuch as it is difficult to effect an entrance into the apartment, and having once got in it is quite as difficult to get out again. This difficulty, which arises in the first instance from the narrowness of the neck or entrance, is considerably augmented by a curious tendency of frequenters of the place to remain standing or sitting within a few inches of the door, although there may be abundance of accommodation in the interior. The two ministering angels who preside over this divan are located in a sort of glass case or bower at the entrance. "Bessy Bell and Mary Gray, they were twa bonnie lassies," and it is recorded of those heroines of Scottish song that when the plague broke out, in order to isolate themselves and avoid the contagion they removed to a bower or hermitage, which "they bigg'd on yon burn-brae" for the purpose. The sequestration, however, was not successful, for they were visited at their retreat by their admirers, caught the contagion, and died. The glass bower, inhabited by the two neat-handed Phillises of the Crosier, the Bessy Bell and Mary Gray of the establishment, appears to be equally attractive, for visitors have the greatest difficulty in getting beyond it.

Unlike some of its big competitors, the Crosier does not possess a restaurant, but it provides dinners at the shortest notice, and furnishes a table d'hôte, or superior kind of dinner, every day. Here, also, for years past, have certain Manchester merchants dined together in a private room at least once a week. The modern restaurant attached to some hotels is an innovation or invention which provides you with a very bad dinner at a very high price. The cooking is bad, the attendance is bad, the whole thing is bad, and is conducive to bad digestion. The steam, the noise, and the general scramble destroy the appetite, and worry the temper and equanimity so necessary to the enjoyment of the most important period of the day. "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith," is a proverb which ought to be hung up in the coffee-room of the Crosier.

THE ALDERMAN AND THE COUNCILLORS.

I.

"YOU are old, Mr. Willert," the councillors said,
"And your hair has become very white;
And we've neither your portrait, nor cast of your head;
Do you think at your age this is right?"
"If this," Mr. Willert replied, "had been sought
In my youth, it had injured my brain,
But now since the battle of life I have fought,
You may paint me, and paint me again."

II.

"You are old," said these men, "yet to dress you devote
Much concern, and you wear a good hat;
And you're never without a bouquet in your coat,
Pray tell us the reason of that?"
"In my youth," said the sage, "I found out that my face,
By itself no great things would provide;
So I drest well and found, as is always the case,
People judge what you are from outside."

III.

"You are old," they remarked, "and in Council you've sat
Till you're nearly the oldest man there:
Pray tell us how long you are going to do that?
For you surely don't want to be mayor!"
"In my youth," he replied, "as a poor little lad,
I was hard set to make both ends meet;
Now I think on life's changes, and feel I am glad
As I sit in an Alderman's seat."

IV.

"You are old, much too old, for a seat on the bench,
Yet you share in the work and get through it,
Notwithstanding the dust, and the heat, and the stench,—
Pray how do you manage to do it?"
"I have answered three questions, and those are enough,"
Said the Alderman,—"This interview
Only gives me surprise you can utter such stuff,"——
So the gentlemen quickly withdrew.

TOWN TALK,
AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

THE TABLEAUX AT THE PRINCE'S THEATRE.

THE greatest house of the season—the largest audience, indeed, we have ever seen within the walls of the Prince's Theatre—responded on Monday night to the appeal made by the management on behalf of the War Victims' Fund. The excellent object apart, there may be just an inkling of doubt in the minds of some pedantic sticklers for old traditions as to the legitimacy of tableaux in a theatre; and in any case the experiment was a hazardous one. That it proved a genuine and perfectly legitimate success is due, in our opinion, to the judgment shown in the selection of the incidents, and to the fine taste which prevented either mawkish sentimentality or obtrusive sensationalism, or, in other words, which restrained the illustrations within the limits of artistic fitness. If Mr. Calvert had designed by this series of living pictures to show the height to which the modern scenic resources of the stage can now attain, he could not more effectually have accomplished his purpose. Each scene is perfect in itself, yet each gains by contrast with the others. The pathos of the two opening scenes and the solemnity of the cathedral prayer are placed in striking juxtaposition with the lurid tragedy of war, and this, again, with the exceeding loveliness of Landseer's "dream of peace" on the southern downs, and the pure serenity of the closing allegory. The Society of Friends, though opposed to the stage, have decided, we believe, not to follow the example of the Hospital Sunday Committee in regard to Pomona Gardens, and reject the proffered contribution to the Fund which they are administering so well. They may accept it, we apprehend, with a perfectly pure conscience, for the stage, in this instance and in its way is helping in that great work of peace, the promotion of which they have so much at heart.

MISS LOUISA MOORE.

The many playgoers in Manchester who hold in pleasant remembrance the days of Nelly and Louisa Moore will be glad to learn that the latter lady has "for a short time" returned to England, after a protracted wandering in foreign lands. Since leaving this country, Miss Moore has been engaged in a little theatrical enterprise on her own account, and, at the head of an itinerant company of her own, has visited so many dreadful places, all over the continent of America, that it is a great relief to know that yellow fever or some other hideous attribute of those uncomfortable districts has not claimed her for its own. Miss Moore has been engaged by Mr. Sothern to perform with him at Glasgow. Let us hope that she will still be with him when he visits us at Easter. Whether that be so or not, we shall look to Mr. Calvert to give Manchester an early opportunity of seeing one of its old favourites.

THE ATHENÆUM MUSICAL SOCIETY.

The programme of the second concert of the Athenæum Musical Society—which was printed in a slightly unusual form—included one considerable novelty. The whole of the first part of the concert was taken up by the performance of a sacred Idyl—*Rebekah*—by Mr. F. Barnby. The principal characters of the Idyl, Rebekah, Isaac, and Eliezer, were assumed by Miss Isabella Higham, Mr. Davison, and Mr. Shorrock. The execution of the music was on the whole satisfactory, especially the choral music and the solos assigned to Miss Higham. The least successful of the three principals was the tenor. Mr. Davison was frequently insufficient, and sometimes out of tune. As to the Idyl itself, whilst we are prepared to admit that a performance in such a room, and with a panio (that was admirably played) as the only instrumental accompaniment, is not heard under the most favourable circumstances, yet there was little in the piece to save it from fatal mediocrity. Neither are we quite sure that it is the sort of piece to command the pleased and sustain attention of such audiences as assemble at these concerts. Certainly is that when the more familiar portions of the programme were reached everybody brightened up amazingly, and betrayed a strong desire to hear everything twice over. A very effecting part-song, a solo, "Oft in the Stilly Night," admirably sung by Miss Heywood, whose voice, always pleasant, has certainly gained of late in richness and fullness; and a simple but pleasing song, "To the Woods," sung by Miss Dow, whose voice is exceedingly sweet and style taking.

were all encored. In the last piece on the programme, selections from Handel's *L'Allegro Il Pensieroso ed Il Moderato*, the soprano solos were capitally sung by Miss Taylor, who invariably commands the sympathies of her audience, not less by her sweet singing, than by her sightless face.

MR. HUMPHREY NICHOLS' GIFTS.

There seems to be a rage this week for calling people noble benefactors of their kind. The Senior Wrangler calls Professor Greenwood one, for teaching youths to construe Greek, and "George Rideal," in two of the daily papers, calls Mr. Humphrey Nichols one, for making several very liberal donations to some charities. It is very good of Mr. Nichols so to do, no doubt; but there are many circumstances, which it would not be good taste to specify particularly, which remove the action far from the heroic. A lax use of eulogistic superlatives is becoming far too common. The most ordinary mortals are styled gods and demi-gods for very little. It is time this sort of thing was stopped. It is undignified and enervating.

DR. ANGUS SMITH ON GERMAN MINERS.

Our townsman, Dr. Angus Smith, contributes not the least readable article to this month's *Good Words*, on German miners. From this article we learn much that is new to us, especially this, that in Germany miners have a literature peculiarly their own. Another lesson taught is "that compulsory education has nourished freedom." The miner's poetry has "mourning for undertone" throughout the whole of it—a strain, Dr. Smith says, he has found in two instances only in England. We wish we could help the Doctor to the name of a collection of Black Country ballads we once met with. There was no mourning tone in them, but rather one of cruel barbarism. The slow care with which the German mines are worked is also dwelt upon. The last sentence shows the doctor's drift. "My conclusions are simple. Men are not better when left to themselves, although their own free exertions may produce more wealth. Wise interference may refine the very poorest, may prevent many deaths called accidental, and may diminish the size of the workhouses."

THE HOPKINSON ADDRESS.

To the distinction of being Senior Wrangler, Dr. Hopkinson has added what some think the even greater glory of being first Smith's Prizeman. In celebration of the first event a meeting of the students of Owens College was held last Monday. It is only natural that on such an occasion a good deal of nonsense should be talked: but from a Senior Wrangler one is rather astonished to meet with such a quantity of complimentary bad logic as proceeded from the mouth of Dr. Hopkinson. It is perhaps not quite fair to judge from newspaper reports, but according to them the hero of the occasion appears to have ascribed his success principally to every blessed individual who ever had a little finger in his education. We pointed out the absurdity of this last week. In all probability the places where Dr. Hopkinson has been educated have not made a pin of difference in the success of his career. Mr. Wilmore, one of Dr. Hopkinson's old masters, had the sense to see this, and, so far as his school was concerned, to say it. But the acme of absurdity was reached when the young doctor classed Professor Greenwood amongst the noblest benefactors of Manchester! Professor Greenwood is a very estimable gentleman, who does a good work well, but he is hardly the most noble benefactor of his fellow citizens. Not only Dr. Hopkinson—*he* couldn't well help it—but all who spoke appear to have made but weak and watery remarks. A manly little outburst of indignation at theological tests on the part of Mr. Joseph Bell seems to have been about the only sentence said worth saying. Professor Barker's remark as to the inferiority of Dr. Hopkinson to his examiners is one of a class of observations which this paper has condemned before. It was a very unnecessary setting down of one who has greatly distinguished himself, simply because he happens to be young. A young man who has gained the senior wranglership ought to be treated by a tutor as an equal rather than a student, and the language of the pedagogue should be dropped. Altogether, the report of the proceedings leaves upon one's mind the impression that their object was the glorification of Owens College rather than of Dr. Hopkinson. This gentleman is, we rejoice to find, about to spend his energies upon a sensible and practical pursuit, and is not going to bury himself within the walls of an academy, to split mathematical hairs for the term of his own life, and to teach other generations to go on splitting them for ever and ever.

FORTUNE-TELLING IN DISGUISE.

The ingenuity of rascality will doubtless be active so long as victims are obtainable. The old-fashioned clumsy fortune-teller has been so effectually sat upon by the law and the police that he or she no longer exists except amongst the lowest and most obscure stratum of society. But as there is still credulousness in all grades, the fortune-teller has to invent new guises to evade the law. The upper classes are duped by the clairvoyant and the spirit-rapper, the lower middle-class by the pseudo-phrenologist. One of the latter stamp is now gulling the servant maids of this neighbourhood in a manner which, however ingenious he may think it, will not, we hope, be a sufficient evasion of the law against fortune-telling scamps. He calls himself "Professor;" he disguises his real character with much low cunning; he does not *tell fortunes*, but he sells a "chart of amusement for the million." This chart is a clumsy mixture of fortune-telling rubbish, astrology, and phrenology. A cultivated mind cannot understand the horrible trash, an ignorant one will be simply mystified by it—a state which the "professor" no doubt desires to create in his dupes. One of these "charts" now lies before us. In it he pretends, with red ink underlining, that "wholesome *advice* only is *intended*;" "*predictions most* studiously avoided," and more to the same purport. The "subject" (*i.e.* victim) of this chart is described as to "name, sex, (year, month, day hour, and minute of) birth, sphere, when married, if engaged (when not married), partner's trade, present beau's or intended's trade, where born, residence, plenitude of sex, strength, figure, countenance, and brain." The book contains a printed form of receipt in which the professor charges for "one blank chart of amusement for the million, with almanack, 1s.; and for "time occupied" in filling up its "*advice portions*," also for "phrenological examination" 1s. 6d., total 2s. 6d. We have sufficiently indicated the nature of the vile rubbish which is thus being palmed off as "advice." We only need to add that the "chart" now before us was actually given by the "professor" to a servant girl in Manchester in return for half-a-crown; that she went to him to "have her fortune told," and came away in the belief that she had had it told for the half-a-crown; that she does not understand one word of the "chart;" that she went on the advice of other servant-girls, who had been to the same professor, and has since sent others for the same purpose. Surely the police have a good case here.

IN MEMORIAM.

T. W. ROBERTSON.

THE long sufferings of our cleverest comedy writer have at length been put an end to by sudden death. It does seem hard that after having lived through years of struggle and adversity, the long-deferred period of well-earned prosperity should be the one selected by disease and death for them to triumph over; but it is only one of those hard things of which the world is full. It is another that two literary failures should have embittered, and perhaps hastened, the last months on earth of one who has done so much to purify and regenerate the modern stage; and that the very press which was so fulsome to his merits and so blind to his defects in the days of his successes should have had its eyes so opened to his faults when lingering disease was robbing his hand of its cunning. We have always prided ourselves upon the standard of our criticisms, and in the days when newspaper adoration of Mr. Robertson was at its height we always gave expression to what we regarded as his faults. It may be accidental, but it is singular, that so many deprecatory articles and observations should lately have been made on Mr. Robertson, whose weaknesses we for so long a time were well nigh the only ones to find out. When the rising sun that had been worshipped so began to set, his worshippers became detractors. Now that he is dead, no doubt the usual reaction will take place, and the press will teem with the old eulogies in their original extravagance.

The plain truth—shorn of flattery on the one hand and malice on the other—is, that Mr. Robertson was essentially a weak but very charming writer. He has been, is, and will be of incalculable value to the stage,

not so much for what he has done himself, as for what he has been, is, and will be the cause of others doing. The stage was gross—coarse—vulgar—and conventional. Mr. Robertson's finical delicacy and gossamer elegance have so influenced comedy at least that audiences will not stand coarse treatment and rude workmanship. This is his great merit, and will be his abiding honour. It is impossible to over-estimate the value of it. Coarseness is the besetting danger of the stage. It is of necessity the vice of an institution so dependent on the breath of the multitude. There is no danger of the drama being too weak. That is a failing that must rectify itself. The drama, to exist at all, must be dramatic. There may be times when undramatic prettiness is successful, but it is only for a while. The danger is the other way. The drama has a constant and instructive striving to be strong—to be effective. And it is partly this very effort to be strong that tends to make it coarse. Strength and beauty in combination is one of the rarest of virtues, and strength is so much more necessary for stage purposes than beauty that the latter is too often wholly sacrificed in the endeavour to obtain the former.

It is Mr. Robertson's glory that he has made beauty of idea and treatment fashionable. To say that his style is lamentably weak, is only to say that he is not a great dramatic author. He may have done the stage more good than if he had been: for the greatest of dramatic authors in the part were strikingly deficient in those qualities of grace and elegance which he has introduced. He has shown more originality than almost any of his predecessors, and his influence for good upon dramatic art ought to be felt long after his frail pieces are forgotten. He has not been great himself, but he may be the cause of greatness. And the successful dramatists of the immediate future, as well as their audiences, will have reason to look back with gratitude to the hard life, and with regret to the untimely death, of Thomas William Robertson.

LONGSIGHT

AND ITS READINGS.

IT is only after considerable research and indefatigable industry on our part, that we are able to give the public a vague idea where Longsight is, rather, which *is* Longsight. We are still unable to say precisely where it begins and where it ends, what is its length and breadth and population. In the course of our endeavours to solve the problem, we at one time well-nigh came to the conclusion that there was no such place at all. We have had to trace out a puzzling complication of invisible lines and abstruse geometrical figures. There is a line known as the parliamentary boundary, which bothered us a good deal. We were told that it was a straight line running down the middle of Stockport Road. It is the most erratic straight line we have ever traced. In the interest of geographical science, however, we continued our pursuit, notwithstanding the conflicting statements of the villagers relative to the place in which they lived, until at length, by the help of a parochial officer, we obtained a clue to the mystery. It appears that Longsight is a village, and that it is situated in a considerable number of townships, which are mixed up with each other in a very remarkable manner. It is made up, amongst other ingredients, of portions of Gorton, Newton, Chorlton-upon-Medlock, Rusholme, and a bit of Moss Side, called Moss Side Detached. How it has come about that these various townships have thus run into each other, like wet tints on a water-colour drawing, and how that bit of Moss Side situated at the end of Birch Lane has got pitched across Victoria Park from its parent's side in the neighbourhood of Greenheys, we cannot say; but we are led to infer that, at some remote period, earthquakes and other disturbing forces must have prevailed in this locality.

If we begin somewhere about Grey Street or Milton Street, and walk along Stockport Road to an architectural object called Rushford Bridge we shall have traversed what may be termed the equator of Longsight—an equator, however, which runs nearly due north and south. Accepting such a simile as representing in some fashion its dimensions, we shall find that the character of this interesting village is as varied as its municipal composition. Beginning our walk in modern Longsight, which consists of an immense display of red brick, broken by waste plots of land on which in summer-time crowds of youths fancy they are playing cricket, we pass through aristocratic Longsight, made up of gothic rows and detached houses standing in their own grounds; and leaving genteel Longsight clustered round the railway-station on our left, we arrive at primitive or dialectical Longsight, where the inhabitants are known by their Christian names.

Longsight has a literary aspect. It is a suburb in which a man with imaginative faculties and poetic instincts might delight to dwell. Viewed in this light, it would be a good starting-place for a novel. For instance, morn and noon and night the inhabitants hear convent bells pealing through the solemn air, and calling to matins, nones, and vespers. Passing from out his customary attic, our poet might go and stand beneath those high, dreary, mysterious brick walls, and, by the light of the shining moon, amid the whispering of the quivering leaves—in the season, of course—construct a variety of plots and incidents, or philosophize about the strange existences wearing away within that gloomy building. Or, he might saunter beneath the trees of Plymouth Grove, and imagine a story about the Little Sisters of the Poor. Rumour says that one of these is a countess. Moreover, not only has Longsight its mysteries and stories, but it has also a peculiar old English character calculated to prove attractive to the bookish mind. It has its "Abbey," and its "Hall," and its old inns with quaint signs and horse-troughs by the roadside. There is a Roman Road somewhere near, and Slade Lane and Kirkmanshulme Lane are associated, or said to be associated, either with the memory of Humphrey Chetham or of the Young Pretender. There are curious corners, odd old houses, rustic cottages, and fine old trees; here and there a lofty *Hylanthus*, now a stately tulip tree, anon a pair of noble elms. Such is the romantic aspect of Longsight. It is, doubtless, with the intention of increasing this effect that the authorities permit its main artery, Stockport Road, to retain the primitive rusticity which has always characterized it within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. The thoroughfare in question is not quite so rocky as one of General Wade's renowned military paths, but seen for a few weeks after a shower, with a number of people struggling across it, it is charmingly suggestive of a general wade.

But Longsight has also a modern or practical character. With the sound of convent bells come the groans of American devils and the screams of railway whistles. Breweries, shops, and builders are assiduously pushing their way, cutting down its trees, and converting its "Halls" and "Houses" into cottages and little streets. The old bar which seemed to bar out the advancing town has at length succumbed, and the heart of Longsight is laid bare to the vulgar gaze. A crowd of poulterers, fishmongers, and butchers have, however, established themselves as an outpost, as if to warn the advancing world that Longsight has at least one aristocratic feature—a fondness for good living; and the village seems determined to maintain its independency, having its local societies, coteries, and circles; its local scandals, its local amusements, and a page all to itself in a local newspaper.

The amusements of Longsight are various and somewhat extensive. First of all there is its religious life. We classify the religious organizations amongst the amusements of Longsight, because church and chapel-going is the Sunday amusement of a great number of the Longsight people. A variety of sects are represented. The Established Church, and the Wesleyan, Independent, and Presbyterian denominations all have their sanctuaries here. There does not seem, however, to be any very fierce partizanship displayed by the various congregations. From what we have been able to gather they meet each other in society, eat their victuals peaceably in one another's presence, and if they do disagree, quarrel not one church with another, but one church with itself; a sort of family tiff which leads as family tiffs sometimes do, to the establishment of separate concerns.

We have already hinted that there are various coteries at Longsight. There is the middle-aged, quiet, "respectable," or high-class genus, which stays at home or visits its neighbours. There is the jovial, sporting genus, which frequents the houses of entertainment and affects an extensive corporation. And there is the youthful or matrimonial genus, which is composed of young ladies and gentlemen displaying modern habits and modern manners. To please these various genera various means exist. The religious institutions afford numerous opportunities during the week in the shape of meetings for various purposes, opportunities which are appreciated by young Longsight. Sometimes little scandals over which Longsight chuckles get afloat. Very often young ladies get floated down to the sea of matrimony. Then there is Belle

Vue close at hand for those who like to go there. Or the domesticated animal may watch, if he chooses, from his own door-step, the fire-works careering about the heavens like a tipsy aurora borealis. Lastly, there are numerous houses of entertainment for man and beast, where pleasure may be found in the company of John Barleycorn.

But perhaps the most notable institution for amusing Longsight at this period of the year is the Literary and Mechanics' Institute, and its most notable way of achieving this end is by means of Saturday Evening Readings. Everybody who travels by 'bus must have heard or read of the Longsight Readings. Passing along Stockport Road at about ten o'clock on Saturday night, the pedestrian meets such a multitude of people that at first he is led to suppose either that there has been a cheap trip somewhere, or that the visitors to Belle Vue are returning homewards. At length he discovers that the "readings" are finished. One evening we sauntered into the building in order to hear and see. We found the prices of admission to be twopence and sixpence, the payment of the latter sum procuring admission to the gallery, where the seats are cushioned. Having a weakness for cushioned seats we paid sixpence. We likewise invested the sum of one penny in a programme, but lived to regret the speculation. The piece of literature in question seemed only compiled for our confusion. When we fondly awaited the appearance of Mr. Somebody, his place was sure to be taken by Mr. Somebody Else. Then, imagine being led to expect a live count, who was also a magician, and who was to show us enchanted oranges, and execution and resurrection of the criminals, together with the marvels of Mecca, and invisibly to return our money into the bargain, only to be disappointed. It was cruel. The character of the entertainment was like everything at Longsight—mixed. The Lancashire dialect was much in vogue. The heavy or attitudinal recitation, in accomplishing which the reciter now faces the right and now the left, lifting his hands like the fins of a talking-fish or the paws of an eloquent bear, was also represented. That most fatiguing and mournful of all performances, the comic song *à la mode* usually has a place on the Longsight programme: on the present evening it was entrusted to a dapper little youth who would have done it very well if its performance had not required him to sink his voice two octaves below the reach of his years. Instrumental music was strong. A company of hand-bell ringers rang till we felt like an owl sitting in a church tower; and two young ladies strove hard to soothe our savage breast by eliciting from the piano strains which made us afraid lest at each fresh burst the thing should explode into innumerable atoms.

The Longsight Readings are presided over by a chairman, whose fatherly duty it occasionally is to commend or admonish his audience. The front seats are usually occupied by a number of Longsight boys, who apparently neglect to wash their little hands and faces, and are of the streets, streety. The middle of the room is filled by the fathers and mothers of Longsight, who find there a cheap and easy way of procuring enjoyment. The back part of the room is the most interesting to a number of youths in round hats, because they have there an opportunity of studying that strange variety of the human species known as the modern middle-class young lady. The gallery being at the back of all is an admirable position for inspection, and as the main object of the variety alluded to appears to be the attracting of male attention, we had no scruples in bestowing ours. True to their angelic instincts, many of the fair beings below were enveloped in clouds. We were reminded of that old custom of placing females in the matrimonial market with halters round their necks. The interval between the first and second parts of the entertainment appears to be the most enjoyable part of the performance to the dear creatures in question. During this period they gracefully lean with their backs against the seat-rail next in advance of the one from which they have risen. Those who are already provided with admirers chat pleasantly and laugh bewitchingly. Those who are unprovided cast languishing glances round the room, or—for they usually hunt in couples or trios—talk loudly with each other, laying great emphasis on the pronoun "I." We rather liked the change of position: it enabled us to study some pretty faces, instead of the ungainly hands and doubtful hair upon which we had been previously staring. In the matter of dress we were struck with the ingenuity of the female mind. For instance, if a girl has a yard or so of silk in her possession, by judiciously cutting it out in what is termed the vandyke pattern, and attaching it round the top of a striped underskirt, she is able to make a great display with very little.

Close by the Literary and Mechanics' Institution is the Chariot and Mares public-house, the head-quarters of a remarkable and rather celebrated club. Of this renowned hostelry, and of other features of life in Longsight, we should like to say a few words, but our space is for the present exhausted, and we must reserve the relation to another convenient opportunity.

[FROM A NATURALIST'S NOTEBOOK.]

THE BLACKBIRD.

O, Blackbird! sing me something well:
While all the neighbours shout thee round,
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou may'st warble, eat, and dwell.

TENNYSON.

IT is with no little hesitation and diffidence that we enter on our present subject. Circumstances are against us; a formidable rival has possession of the ground, and nightly presents a delighted public not with our bird as he appears in his ordinary life, but with a whole bevy under conditions as novel as alluring. "Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie" are not to be seen under every hedge or in every embowered lane. Then, too, their dimensions are great and their vocalization astounding. Their situation, moreover, is singularly appetizing. Dare we then enter on a contest so hopeless? But we have already begun to arm, and recent experience shows that submission does not always procure mercy; so we may as well fight the quarrel out *à l'outrance*, and try to extort the best terms we can for ourselves and our black ally. After all why should we *not* take this course? Under what patent does the Major Domo of the Prince's house claim the monopoly of any particular bird we should like to know? The assurance is insufferable; the attempt a tyranny not to be endured for a moment in this country of freedom. So sound trumpets, strike up drums, forward, and Vive le Merle!

The Blackbird is something of a cosmopolite. The Germans write heavy articles about him; the French sing and play with him; the unromantic Italians eat him, as they do every feathered creature from a rook to a robin; the treacherous Greek listens to his minstrelsy with a lazy delight; whilst we island savages lay in a store of powder and small shot with the first snow, and wage remorseless war against him.

Blythe songster—inveterate thief—what would the sweet country be without you? Long before the lark leaves the tufted grass; hours before he chants *Deus in excelsis* high in the blue heavens, the blackbird is awake, singing in the rich man's shrubbery and the hedgerows round the labourer's cottage. Washed in the early dew he always seems to us at such times peculiarly glossy, brisk, and debonair. Without possessing the smallest pretensions to gravity, he is, as his name implies, usually dressed from head to foot "in customary suit of solemn black." But this habit is not invariable, as individuals may often be seen with snowy waistcoats, or spotless neckties, whilst occasionally a *rara avis* flits past us in the gloaming robed all in white.

In the great company of native artists that in field and coppice discourse such excellent music, none can compare with the blackbird and thrush. In the cool morning, and even after the early stars are glittering in the sky, the thrush, perched on the topmost bough of some tall tree, pours forth his prodigality of song,—sweet, tender, varied, and sustained. Unambitious minstrel, he sings before the fashionable world is awake, and long after their feet have quitted the moistened grass. In the spring, especially when the days are wet and warm, the song of the thrush is heard at all hours. Still, to our thinking, he keeps his choicest lays for sunrise and sunset. The blackbird on the other hand adheres closely to the old adage—

Early to bed and early to rise
Is the way to be healthy, wealthy, and wise,

We have noticed the time at which he rises, wherein he is a pattern to all birds, and must now record that his head is usually under his wing when the romantic thrush is still singing—"The young may moon is beaming love"—to his soft mate, somewhere within easy distance you may be sure. Not that our bird goes to rest without pouring forth his grateful acknowledgments for the blessings of the day; only, as it were, he says his prayers earlier. It is not every dweller in great

cities that can distinguish the song of the thrush from that of the blackbird. The former, as we have said, is sustained, varied, and exquisitely melodious, whilst the latter displays far less compass, is more short and abrupt, and has to our fancy less expression. In fact the lay of each songster in no small degree resembles the physical character of the singer: the thrush being shy, meek, and gentle, whilst his rival is bold, forward, and obtrusive. Scott sums up his character with a poet's *curiosa felicitas* when he calls him "the blythe blackbird."

If any bird ever earned the miserable misnomer of "fast," it is the subject of this essay. In one sense, at least, it is his by right, for he is always in a hurry. He gets up, as we have shown, at unreasonable hours, hops about in a fidgety way from hour to hour; constantly indulges in short flights and abrupt turns for no particular reason, and builds his nest—from sheer restlessness, we believe—before any prudent bird would think of choosing the site of his nuptial mansion. There is seldom a leaf to be seen when he constructs his mud-cabin, unless he selects some evergreen, ivy-mantled wall, or tree. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the spoiler so frequently disturbs his domestic felicity—pulls down his house, and carries off his greenish mottled eggs. Our busy black friend is not heart-broken by a first failure, but at a more favourable season commences housekeeping a second time. Aristotle (c. v., book 13) mentions this fact, and tells us the bird lays twice. Buffon also records that the *first* deposit of eggs ranges from five to six, whilst the *second* rarely exceeds three or four. As a boy, we were sadly given to robbing nests, and carried on our peculations in a very favourable locality, but it never fell to our lot to find so rich a prize as six eggs in a single nest.

With a sad want of politeness, we have hitherto omitted all mention of materfamilias, who is smaller and less finely proportioned than her mate. Nor is she so gorgeously attired as her lord, for whilst he is dressed in a suit of black that always seems new, she looks as if she had worn hers till long use had changed the sable to a rusty brown. The difference between the colour of the male and female is less marked before the first moult. In these days character is a valuable commodity, and on it depends much of our comfort and success in life. In this matter the Blackbird has been cruelly used, for scandalous people have done their best to ruin his reputation. Evil-minded persons are not wanting who exalt the song-thrush at the expense of our friend with the orange bill. They allege, that though the former commits depredations on our fruit gardens, he expiates the offence by destroying snails, especially two species.—*Helices aspersa et nemoralis*—at the same time affirming that whilst the Blackbird is an inveterate thief he possesses no redeeming qualities. This sort of hasty Jedwood justice often leads to Jedwood practice, which may be thus summarized. First, the execution—next, the trial—and lastly the acquittal, which, however, must have proved but an indifferent compensation to the gentleman who had been hanged. Now this summary kind of Border injustice has often within our knowledge been dealt out to poor Blackey, and a war of extermination has been waged against him on premisses and conclusions equally false. That the thrush does good service is most true, but it is not less true that the Blackbird is equally fond of shell snails, and being both larger and stronger, and possessed of an appetite at least quite as keen, he may reasonably be credited with doing a similar amount of execution. The thrush is quite as fond of good fruit as his neighbours, but his sobriety and Quaker-like apparel are in his favour. When disturbed, he generally drops slyly on the ground and trips noiselessly away, whilst the silly Blackbird's sharp and hurried cry is sure to attract attention if his black dress and orange bill have not caught the eye. In short, as far as theft is concerned, "one"—to paraphrase from Lord Dundreary—"is as bad as the other, and perhaps worse"—but then we cannot hope to keep a choir without paying for it.

Misfortune is said to introduce us to strange bedfellows, and it might be added—from the experience of a great but unfortunate Capital—that hunger and necessity reconcile us to abnormal dishes. If hard-pressed—we say it with profound sorrow—our pet bird occasionally turns cannibal, as the following anecdote shows. Some seasons since, whilst shooting in Pembrokeshire during very severe weather, when the snow lay deep and hard, we noticed on several occasions these birds beating the hedges, and when a sparrow, wren, or chaffinch was flushed, hunt the quarry down and tear it to pieces.

We have spoken of the Blackbird as a minstrel; let us now glance at him as a mimic. Bechstein, in his interesting book on cage birds, gives us the following account of his genius in captivity. "Its memory is so good that it retains, without mixing them, several airs at once, and will even repeat little sentences." The price of a creature so perfectly educated is rather high. Some birds seem gifted with powers and instincts that fit them pre-eminently for freedom, and the Blackbird is one of these. In confinement, as we all know, he sings, but to our ear not from the fulness of his heart. His song sounds rather like a compound of bravado and despair, and we have often thought, whilst passing along some dingy street, the captive resembled a Reel-skin at the stake chanting his death lay.

Have birds any intellectual attributes? Surely they have. Do they not know fear, love, hate, anger, and jealousy? We were once led to think vanity might have been added to the list. When on a visit to a gentle lady whose villa lay not far from the Thames, we had some literary work to do, and rose with the first dawn of the summer morning to get it over before breakfast. Our window looked out on the lawn, where, at that still hour, five or six blackbirds, full of strength, beauty, and assurance, were always to be seen. At the edge of a laurel fence there seemed something like the shadow of a bird restlessly limping to and fro. A little careful observation showed that it was not only a bird, but a black, or rather a rusty bird, minus a leg, which had probably been shot off during the previous winter. Did he shrink from displaying his infirmity? Poor fellow; we can see him now, as he slunk under the shadow, or paused as if to contemplate the sports and pastimes of his more fortunate mates. When they retired, the lame bird crept from his partial concealment, advanced on to the lawn, put on a brisk and knowing air, and hobbled about as if despite his lameness and rusty coat he was trying to persuade himself that his misfortunes might not wholly unfit him for succeeding in society. How idle that miserable bird made us! What disgrace did he not bring on us; for in the plenitude of our sympathy we wasted one whole morning in writing a sonnet on his sorrows, and thereby brought down on our head an editorial reprimand for the non-appearance of "copy."

THE SENIOR WRANGLER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—In your last issue you seem to twit with incongruity my proposition (afterwards withdrawn) that a few citizens of Manchester should celebrate the recent award of the Senior Wranglership to Dr. Hopkinson by presenting that gentleman with an address at a public dinner. Let me tell you why I made that proposition, and then I will leave you to decide upon its "funny" character or otherwise. I made that proposition not simply because I wanted to pay a compliment to Dr. Hopkinson, who had brought this great prize to Manchester—though my first feeling was one of gratitude to him on that account—but because there were two considerable public questions behind this wranglership, neither of which would have been the worse for the discussion which such a manifestation would have provoked. The one is the question of University Tests and the other that of the grant to Owens College. I could not mention these in my letter, for obvious reasons; but I leave you or anyone else to judge whether either of these questions would not have been strengthened by being discussed with the Senior Wrangler behind it at an influential gathering of the citizens of Manchester. As to the dinner, which has been called an un-academic vehicle for a compliment to the Senior Wrangler, I shall maintain that, if a dinner be unacademic, it is not only a very natural and a very harmless, but also a very pleasant, way of preluding such an address. A young man of mature age, coming from college, has never, in my experience, turned his back upon the "fruges consumere" part of his examination yet; and, to assume that Dr. Hopkinson is so sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought that he would have fallen prostrate before the rank materialism of turtle soup has just a whiff of twaddle about it. It was not so very long ago quite academic for a young lawyer, after taking his degree, to eat his way into his profession; and if the Church did not follow suit, it was only because for her the drinking effort was more acceptable. So that really I make little account of the academic plea, especially since it is precisely a plea of the kind which keeps Dr. Hopkinson out of his fellowship. I should have had more faith in the speedy repeal of all such restrictions if there had been more heartiness in Manchester in this matter. Even had we violated gently some old traditions thereby, that valuable breed would not have been quite extinguished.—Yours,

J. FOX TURNER.

Feb. 7, 1871.

GOOD HOUSE COAL to be had at 48, GRANBY ROW, at 7d. per Cwt
BEST, 8d. per Cwt. Carted one mile and a half.

THE GREAT ANNUAL SALE
AT
RICHARD BATEMAN'S
18 & 20, OLDHAM-STREET & DALE-STREET
MANCHESTER,
WHICH IS NOW TAKING PLACE.

Public attention is respectfully directed to this important **Annual Sale,** and the **advantages it offers.**

We have much pleasure in announcing that we have recently opened a Department for **Household Linens,** and **General Drapery,** jointly with the Fancy Trade, and we especially desire to draw notice to this new feature in our Business. The Stock, in addition to all the Standard makes, contains numerous **Lots of Domestic Drapery at remarkable prices.**

The Managers of our various Departments have been for some time past actively engaged in the endeavour to purchase for this **Sale First-Class Goods under value,** and owing to the continuance of The War, and other causes, they have been most successful.

We would here refer to the fact, that the utmost efforts have ever been used to place before our Patrons the **best products of British and Foreign Manufacture,** and that articles of an inferior quality never form part of the **Stock at Britannia House.**

Household Linen Department.

White Toilet Quilts.

40 11-4 Size..... at 8s 11d
60 11-4 Size..... at 11s 6d
50 12-4 Size..... at 12s 6d
26 13-4 Size..... at 14s 6d, usual price 18s 6d
20 13-4 Size..... at 19s 6d, usual price 27s 6d
35 14-4 Size..... at 25s 6d

Witney, Bath, and Bury Blankets.

500 Pairs... 10-4..... 8s 11d; 11-4..... 10s 9d; 12-4..... 13s 6d; 12-4..... 15s 6d; 13-4..... 17s 6d; 13-4..... 21s; 13-4..... 25s 6d; 13-4..... 32s 6d — All Wool

Cotton Sheetings, Twilled and Plain.

5 Pieces, 2 yards wide 1s 0½d
6 Pieces, 2 yards wide 1s 3½d
7 Pieces, 2½ yards wide 1s 4½d
6 Pieces, 2½ yards wide 1s 6½d
6 Pieces, 2½ yards wide 1s 11½d
8 Pieces, 3 yards wide 2s 4d

Bleached Damask Table Cloths.

100 6-4 White Damask Cloths 1s 9½d
80 7-4 White Damask Cloths 2s 11d
170 8-4 White Damask Cloths 3s 9d
75 8-10 White Damask Cloths 4s 9d
50 10-12 White Damask Cloths 9s 6d
60 10-14 White Damask Cloths 11s 9d
55 10-16 White Damask Cloths 15s 9d
36 10-16 White Damask Cloths 19s 9d
6 Pieces 8-4 Half-bleached Table Linen, 1s 11½d, usual price 3s 3d
5-8 Size Doyleys, 1s 4d to 3s 9d per dozen
25 dozen 8-4 Size Half-bleached Damask Cloths, at 3s 11d, usual price 4s 11d
5-8 Size Table Napkins, 2s 11d, 3s 9d, and 4s 11d, and up to 14s 9d
A Lot of Soiled Table Linen, very cheap.

Household Linen Department.

Lace, and Muslin Curtains.

100 Pairs, 3 yards long, at 1s 11d, 2s 9d, 3s 11d, to 7s 9d
450 Pairs, 3½ yards long, at 3s 11d, 4s 11d, 5s 11, to 15s 9d
200 Pairs, 4 yards long, at 6s 11d, 8s 11d, 10s 9d, to 45s
Swan Embroidered Curtains, 4 yards long, 21s to 63s

Pure Finished Long Cloths.

20 Pieces, 32 inches wide ..... at 3½d
25 Pieces, 32 inches wide ..... at 4½d
24 Pieces, 36 inches wide ..... at 5½d
30 Fine Washed Long Cloth ..... at 2½d
Horrocks's Long Cloths 4d to 6½d, Crewdson's 5½d to 7½d, Findlay's 4½d to 6½d per yard.

Lancashire, Welsh, and Saxony Flannels.

A Lot of All Wool Shirting Flannels at 10½d, worth 1s 3d
20 Pieces of 1¼-yard wide Washing Damask 1s 0½d, worth 1s 6½d
12 Pieces ¾-yard wide Nursery Diaper 5½d to 9½d
40 Dozens Linen Towels..... at 2s 6d per doz
30 Dozens Linen Towels..... at 3s 6d, worth 5s 6d
200 Print Dresses, of 8 yards at 3s 9d, usual price, 5s 9d
Higher-priced qualities very much reduced

Mantle Department.

Having just purchased the entire Stocks of Two Eminent French Manufacturers, consisting of Rich Lyons Velvet, Cloth, and other Jackets and Mantles, we shall offer them with the remainder of our Winter Stock during the Sale, at the following exceptional prices:—

Mantle Department—Continued.

Loose Silk Velvet Jackets, 35s 6d, usual price, 45s.
Loose Silk Velvet Jackets, 49s 6d, usual price 63s
Loose Silk Velvet Jackets, handsomely trimmed, 3 and 4 Guineas, usual price 4 and 5 Guineas
Fitting Silk Velvet Jackets, handsomely trimmed, 4 Guineas, usual price 5 Guineas
Very Handsome Pattern Jackets, of Rich Lyons Velvet, 5 Guineas, worth 8 Guineas
Our Very Best Pattern Velvet Jackets, 7 Guineas, worth 10 Guineas
Loose Black and Coloured Cloth Jackets, 10s 6d, ordinary value 15s 6d
Loose and Semi-fitting Black and Coloured Cloth Jackets, 15s 6d, ordinary value 21s
Loose and Semi-fitting Black and Coloured Cloth Jackets, 21s, ordinary value 31s 6d
The New "Coattee" All Wool German Cloth Jackets, 31s 6d, ordinary value 45s
Loose or Fitting Black and Coloured Cloth Jackets, 42s ordinary value 55s
Loose or Fitting Black and Coloured Cloth Jackets, 49s 6d, ordinary value 63s
The colours in the above are choice shades of green, brown, claret, mulberry, blue, &c., &c.
A Special Lot of French and German Black Cloth Fitting (Pattern) Jackets, at 2 and 3 Guineas, worth 4 and 6 Guineas
Ladies' and Children's Waterproof Cloaks, in every fashionable shape and colour, at very reduced prices during the Sale
A Lot of Real Sealskin Jackets (choice Skins), at 7 and 9 Guineas, price earlier in the season 9 and 12 Guineas
Superior Dogskin Jackets, at 3 and 4 Guineas, worth 5 and 6 Guineas
A Manufacturer's Stock of Opera Mantles, various styles and colours, all at 6s 11d each, the ordinary price would be 21s

Shawl Department.

The War has been, as will be well understood, the cause of immense sacrifices on the part of the Lyons manufacturers, famed for their beautiful and costly designs in Woven Long and Square Shawls; we have several lots which will be shown along with the products of the manufacturers at Paisley, at prices greatly to the advantage of buyers. The prices commence at 1 Guinea, and upwards to 12 Guineas.
120 Queensland Wool Shawls, at 6s 11d, ordinary price 10s 11d
70 Queensland Wool Shawls, at 9s 11d, ordinary price 15s 6d
50 Reversible Wool Shawls, at 19s 6d, ordinary price 29s 6d
35 Reversible Wool Shawls, at 25s 6d, ordinary price 35s 6d
A lot of Elegant Wool Shawls, novel designs, at 29s 6d, worth 2 Guineas
An extraordinary purchase of the Finest Saxony Wool Scarf Shawls, in all the Scotch Clans, at very reduced prices.
The stock of Black Lace, Grenadine, Llama, and Cashmere Shawls, Mantles, and Jackets, will be sold at immensely reduced prices.

Silk Department.

Black Silks.

We have during the past month concluded extensive and advantageous purchases of Black Silks, the manufacture of C. J. Bonnet and Cie, and C. M. Teillard and Cie, of Lyons, who possess a world-wide repute for purity, richness, and durability of make.
The prices are 4s 11d, 5s 11d, 6s 11d, 7s 11d, 8s 11d, and 9s 11d per yard, all guaranteed, and doubtless ere long these goods will be very scarce and dear.

Silk Department—Continued.

Black Silks, of English manufacture and excellent value, at 21s, 25s 6d, 29s 6d, 35s 6d, 39s 6d, 42s, 49s 6d, 55s 6d, 59s 6d, and 63s, the Dress of 12 yards, or any length cut.
A Lot of Black Figured Silks, from 3s 11½d to 5s 11d per yard, much under value.

Coloured, Fancy, and Plain Silks.

A Lot of Coloured Silk Dresses, 12 to 14 yards, 39s 6d, worth 47s 6d
A Lot of Self-coloured Broche Silks, 12 to 14 yards, 49s 6d, worth 65s
A Lot of French Chene Silks, 12 to 14 yards, 49s 6d, worth 69s
A Lot of Black Ground French Silks, rich Broche in colours, 14 yards, 69s 6d, worth 87s 6d
50 very beautiful French Silk Dresses, at prices ranging from 4½ Guineas up to 7½ Guineas the Full Dress: prices before the war would be at least double.
A Lot of Coloured Gros de Suez, at 4s 11½d, usual price 5s 11d
A Lot of Coloured Gros Grains, at 5s 11½d, very choice shades of colour
The present Stock of Japanese Silk Dresses will be cleared off at a great reduction; prices from 25s 6d to 39s 6d the Full Dress

Trimmed Robe and Costume Department.

In this Department we hold a very large Stock of Made-up Dresses, Costumes, &c., principally from Berlin, the Prussian manufacturers having been of late very successful in their designs.
Repp and Wincey Trimmed Robes, at 10s 6d, with boddice
Repp Serge and Wincey Trimmed Robes, at 21s, with boddice
Costumes, with Jacket complete, 29s 6d, former price, 42s, in French Merino, Serge, and other Foreign Fabrics
Costumes, with Jacket complete and Lined Flannel, 35s 6d, former price, 50s in Satinlaine, Repp, and Serge, handsomely trimmed
Costumes, with Jacket complete and Lined Flannel, 49s 6d, former price, 63s, in Satinlaine, Satinroyal, and Austrian Cloth.
Costumes of Five Articles, Jacket inclusive at 59s 6d, usual price, 5 and 6 Guineas, very elegant Prussian patterns, trimmed fur, and in other fashionable styles.
A Lot of Black Silk Trimmed Robes and Costumes from 3½ to 9 Guineas, upon which large reductions have been made
50 Trimmed Robes, with boddice at 10s 6d, Summer Stock
60 Trimmed Robes, with boddice, at 15s 9d, Summer Stock
40 Trimmed Robes, with boddice, at 21s, Summer Stock
A few elaborate French Costumes, at 59s 6d, original prices 5 and 6 Guineas
The foregoing Four Lots are of most extraordinary value
Several Lots of Prussian Costumes, complete in Lawn, Linen, and Cambric, will be cleared off at prices ranging from 12s 6d to 39s 6d

Bonnet and Hat Department.

We have bought for cash the Stocks of several eminent Modistes and Hat Manufacturers, at immensely reduced prices, consequent on the continuance of the war. These purchases include a large collection of Millinery, Pattern Bonnets, and Trimmed Hats, in highly distinguished modes. The Hats untrimmed embrace an extensive choice in Velvet, Grebe, and Real Seal. We have confidence and pleasure in assuring our friends that, having regard to the superior excellence of the goods here announced, the prices will be found to offer very extraordinary advantages, as follows:—

ALEX. ROSS'S CELEBRATED HAIR PREPARATIONS.
HAIR DYE, 3s. 6d. HAIR DESTROYER, or Depilatory for Removing Hair from the Face, 3s. 6d. SPANISH FLY OIL, or Oil of Cantharides, for the Growth of Hair and Whiskers, 3s. 6d. ALEX. ROSS'S GREAT HAIR RESTORER, for Changing Grey Hair to its Proper Colour, 3s. 6d. Had of all Chemists in Manchester. ALEX. ROSS, 245 High Holborn, London.

DUNKERLEY & FRANKS' UMBRELLAS
Are made on FOX'S Celebrated FRAMES, and Are Unequalled for QUALITY, DURABILITY, and PRICE.
7, SWAN STREET, NEW CROSS, MANCHESTER.

Bonnet and Hat Department—Continued.

Millinery Bonnets, from 10s 9d to 21s, usual price 2 and 3 guineas
Trimmed Hats, from 10s 9d to 21s, usual prices 30s to 2 guineas
Black Silk Velvet Hats, 2s 11d and 3s 6d, worth 7s
Black French Velvet Hats, 5s 11d, worth 9s 6d
White Felt Hats, 3s 6d and 4s 6d, worth 8s 6d
Coloured Velvet Gipsy Hats, 6s 6d, worth 12s 9d
High Crown Seals, 14s 9d, worth 21s
Seal and Grebe, 5s 11d, worth 12s 9d
Seal and Grebe, 12s 9d, worth 21s
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Comprising Satinlaines, Silk and Wool Repps, Serge, Winceys, French Merinoes, Stuffs, and other Dress Materials, in colours and black. The following Lots represent purchases for the Sale, much under value, and the major portion of our ordinary Stock classified into the following Lots. We believe the whole to be of unsurpassed value, and invite comparison.

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Lot 3. 2158 Yards French Satinlaine, 1s 11½d, worth 2s 6d, in colours and black
Lot 4. 2978 Yards French Satinlaine, 1s 4½d, worth 1s 11½d, in colours and black
Lot 5. 1892 Yards English Satinlaine, 1s 2½d, worth 1s 8½d in colours and black
Lot 6. 2351 Yards English Ribbed Satinlaine, 1s 6½d, worth 1s 11½d, in colours and black
Lot 7. 1739 Yards Best French Repp, 3s 11½d, worth 4s 9d, in colours and black
Lot 8. 1943 Yards French All Wool Repp, 2s 11½d, worth 3s 11½d, in colours and black
Lot 9. 2670 Yards French Silk Repp, 2s 11½d, worth 3s 6d, in colours and black

Dress Department—Continued.

Lot 10. 1032 Yards French All Wool Repp, 1s 11½d, worth 2s 6d, in colours and black
Lot 11. 2051 Yards English Wool Repp, 1s 1½d, worth 1s 6½d, in colours
Lot 12. 1500 Yards English Wool Repp, 1s 0½d, worth 1s 4½d
Lot 13. 1670 Yards English Wool Repp, 9½d, worth 1s 0½d
Lot 14. 972 Yards Best Wool Serge, 1s 11½d, usual value. 2s 11½d, in colours and black
Lot 15. 911 Yards Super Wool Serge, 1s 6½d, usual value, 1s 11½d, in colours
Lot 16. 1097 Yards Diagonal Cloth, 10½d, usual value, 1s 2½d, in colours
Lot 17. 3089 Yards French Merinoes, in all shades, 1s 11½d, a very cheap lot, usual value, 2s 6½d, in all colours
Lot 18. 4037 Yards Figured Alpacas and Russel Cords, 7½d, usual value, 10½d
Lot 19. 2069 Yards Real Aberdeen Winceys, 10½d, usual value, 1s 3½d
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Lot 22. 2050 Yards Clan Tartan Camlets, 10½d, usual price, 1s 6½d
Lot 23. 1391 Yards Clan Tartan Satinlaine (best goods), 2s 11½d, usual price, 3s 11½d

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100 Dozen Ladies' Long Cloth Tucked Skirts, 1s 9½d, 2s 3d, 2s 11d, 3s 6d, 3s 11d, and 4s 11d.

Ladies' Underclothing Department—Continued.

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